

3-1219
PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY - SERIES 4, #5 FEBRUARY 23, 1978
JILL STRICKLAND

LARAMIE, WYOMING
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

TAPE: CUT ONE - SOUND OF RAILROAD TRAIN CLICKING ALONG TRACKS, THEN
TRAIN WHISTLE, FOLLOWED BY MORE CLICKING - HOLD BRIEFLY,
THEN FADE UNDER:

NARR: THE SOUND OF A FREIGHT TRAIN CROSSING THE SOUTHEASTERN CORNER
OF STATE OF WYOMING. AS IT SNAKES THOROUGH THE LONELY
MOUNTAINS AND PLAINS, ITS WHISTLE BLOWS A MOURNFUL GREETING
TO A STRING OF TOWNS THAT OWE THEIR EXISTENCE TO THE UNION
PACIFIC RAILROAD. MOST OF THEM SHRANK TO ONLY A HUNDRED
PEOPLE OR SO AFTER THE RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION CREWS MOVED
ON. BUT TWO GREW LARGER: CHEYENNE, THE CAPITAL OF WYOMING;
AND LARAMIE, HOME OF WYOMING STATE UNIVERSITY. LARAMIE'S
GROWTH FROM A HANDFUL OF TENTS TO A TOWN OF MORE THAN
TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE IN LITTLE MORE THAN A CENTURY IS OUR
STORY TODAY.

TAPE: SOUND OF RAILROAD TRAIN IN FULL BRIEFLY, THEN FADE UNDER
AND OUT BEHIND:

ANNCR: YOU'RE LISTENING TO ANOTHER PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY:
LARAMIE, WYOMING -- A FRONTIER TOWN A CENTURY AGO, WYOMING'S
INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL TODAY. YOUR REPORTER IS _____ .

TAPE: CUT TWO - WESTERN THEME - IN FULL BRIEFLY, THEN FADE UNDER
AND OUT BEHIND:

NARR: A HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS AGO, THERE WAS NO LARAMIE. THE
LAND WE NOW KNOW AS WYOMING HAD ONLY RECENTLY BECOME PART
OF THE UNITED STATES, AS A PORTION OF PRESIDENT THOMAS
JEFFERSON'S VAST LOUISIANA PURCHASE FROM FRANCE. THE FRENCH-

NARR: (CONT) CANADIAN FUR TRAPPER JACQUES LA RAMIE WAS WORKING THE TRIBUTARIES OF THE NORTH PLATTE RIVER. ONE DAY, LA RAMIE SET OUT FOR NEW TERRITORY, IGNORING A WARNING THAT THE INDIANS WERE UNFRIENDLY. HE NEVER CAME BACK. BUT HE LEFT HIS NAME TO A TOWN, A FORT ON THE PLATTE RIVER, A MOUNTAIN PEAK, AND THREE RIVERS. FORTY YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, CONSTRUCTION CREWS BUILDING THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CROSSED THE LARAMIE MOUNTAINS AND REACHED THE LARAMIE RIVER. NATURALLY, THE TOWN THEY BUILT ON THE RIVERBANK WAS ALSO NAMED LARAMIE.

TAPE: WESTERN THEME AS A BRIDGE -- IN FULL BRIEFLY, THEN FADE UNDER:

NARR: LARAMIE'S EARLY DAYS WERE ROUGH AND LAWLESS. THE FIRST TRAIN THAT CAME TO THE SHANTY-TOWN OF LOGS AND CANVAS WAS KNOWN AS "HELL ON WHEELS" BECAUSE IT CARRIED NOT ONLY LUMBER AND GROCERIES BUT ALSO GAMBLERS, SALOONKEEPERS AND PROSTITUTES. A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT FORMED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. BUT IT WAS SOON TAKEN OVER BY OUTLAWS WHO KEPT THE TOWN IN SUCH AN UPROAR THAT CITIZENS FORMED A VIGILANTE COMMITTEE TO FIGHT BACK. EVEN THE HANGING OF SEVERAL OUTLAWS DIDN'T STOP THE REST, HOWEVER. FINALLY THE TOWN GOVERNMENT WAS DISSOLVED AND LARAMIE WAS PLACED UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNTIL WYOMING BECAME A TERRITORY.

ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL FEATURES OF LARAMIE'S EARLY GOVERNMENT IS THAT WOMEN HAD THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND HOLD OFFICE -- LONG BEFORE WOMAN SUFFRAGE WAS UNIVERSAL IN THE UNITED STATES. WOMEN DID MORE THAN JUST VOTE IN LARAMIE,

NARR: HOWEVER. THEY TAUGHT SCHOOL, RAN BUSINESSES, AND HELPED
(CONT) THEIR HUSBANDS RUN RANCHES. SOMETIMES, WHEN THEIR
HUSBANDS DIED, THEY OPERATED RANCHES ALL ALONE.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- EMMA WILSON

"I HAD THE WHOLE RANCH TO SUPERVISE, AND FOR EIGHT YEARS,
I TOOK CARE OF THAT RANCH AND LIVED BY MYSELF IN MY HOUSE."

NARR: EMMA WILSON, A LARAMIE OLD-TIMER, REMEMBERS RANCHING IN THE
1930'S. WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT, SHE
TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR 800-HECTARE RANCH.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- WILSON

"I MADE A GOOD LIVING, SO THAT WE ADDED TO THE RANCH. WE
IMPROVED OUR LIVESTOCK HERD, SO WE HAD A NICE BIG HERD OF
CATTLE. AND WE HAD GOOD HORSES, AND WE PROGRESSED FROM
HORSES TO MERCHANIZED MACHINERY."

NARR: RANCHING ALWAYS MEANT A GREAT DEAL OF WORK, EMMA WILSON
SAYS. WHILE HER HUSBAND WAS ALIVE, SHE KEPT HOUSE, FED THE
ANIMALS, LOOKED AFTER TWO CHILDREN, COOKED FOR ALL THE
RANCH HANDS, AND HELPED WITH THE HAYING. IN HER SPARE
TIME, SHE GARDENED. AFTER HER HUSBAND DIED, SHE LEFT THE
COOKING TO THE FOREMAN'S WIFE AND TOOK ON NEW DUTIES.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- WILSON

"I HAD TO LOOK AFTER EVERYTHING. I HAD TO DO THE BUYING.
I HAD TO DO THE SELLING. I HAD TO KEEP UP ON THE TREND OF
THE LIVESTOCK, HAD TO KEEP UP ON IMPROVING THE PRODUCTIVITY
OF THE HAY, SO THAT I COULD (PAY THE MORTGAGE). WE HAD A BIG
DEBT. SO I HAD THAT TO PAY UP BESIDES KEEP THAT RANCH
GOING."

NARR: EVERY YEAR OF THOSE EIGHT YEARS SHE RAN THE RANCH ALONE,
EMMA WILSON MADE A PROFIT. SHE DID IT BY WORKING HARD AND
BUYING AND SELLING SHREWDLY. EVEN THOUGH HER DAYS WERE
LONG, SHE SAYS SHE NEVER CONSIDERED DOING ANYTHING ELSE:

TAPE: CUT SIX -- WILSON

"I WOULDN'T CHANGE MY LIFE FOR ANYTHING. MY WHOLE HEART AND SOUL WAS IN RANCHING. I WASN'T INTERESTED IN GOING AWAY."

NARR: ANOTHER PERSON WHO REMEMBERS LARAMIE'S EARLY DAYS IS TED OLSON, AUTHOR OF RANCH ON THE LARAMIE AND TWO OTHER BOOKS ABOUT WYOMING. NOW SEVENTY-NINE YEARS OLD, MISTER OLSON READ US A PASSAGE FROM HIS BOOK ABOUT HIS FAVORITE CHORE ON HIS FATHER'S RANCH: DRIVING THE CATTLE UP TO THEIR SUMMER PASTURE.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- OLSON

"I LIKED THE JOB. IN LATE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER THE HIGH PLAINS ARE INTRICATELY EMBROIDERED WITH THE PINKS AND BLUES AND LAVENDERS AND WHITES OF DEMURE FLOWERS, WHOSE EXISTENCE YOU WOULD NEVER GUESS A FEW WEEKS LATER. CHOKECHERRY BLOSSOMS FILLED THE DRAWS (STREAM VALLEYS) WITH DRIFTS AS WHITE AS THOSE THAT MELTED ONLY A FORTNIGHT AGO. PREVIOUSLY I HAD KNOWN THE PRAIRIE ONLY IN MIDSUMMER AND FALL, WHEN ITS BEAUTY WAS MUTED, A PASTEL OF SHIFTING AND SHADOWS. I HAD NEVER REALIZED THAT FOR A WEEK OR TWO EVERY YEAR IT COULD BE A GARDE."

THE BEAUTY OF THE LAND AROUND LARAMIE WAS ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT DREW RANCHERS THERE. ANOTHER WAS THE AVAILABILITY OF WATER -- A CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN SUCH A DRY CLIMATE. WITHOUT ARTIFICIAL IRRIGATION, RANCHERS COULD NOT GROW ENOUGH HAY TO FEED THEIR LIVESTOCK. IN A DRY YEAR, WHEN FARMS WITH OLDER WATER RIGHTS USED UP THE AVAILABLE IRRIGATION WATER, MANY RANCHERS WHO HAD BOUGHT THEIR LAND MORE RECENTLY WENT BANKRUPT. SO RANCHING WAS AND STILL IS A RISKY BUSINESS ON THE HIGH PLAINS OF THE AMERICAN WEST. THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE RANCHERS AROUND LARAMIE MADE A GOOD LIVING FROM THEIR LAND IS A TESTIMONY TO THEIR

NARR: SHREWDNESS, SKILL AND INDUSTRY. THE TOWN OF LARAMIE GREW
(CONT) ALONG WITH THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY ON THE SURROUNDING
PLAINS.

TAPE: CUT EIGHT - WESTERN THEME AS A BRIDGE - IN FULL BRIEFLY,
THEN FADE UNDER:

NARR: LARAMIE WAS BORN AS A RAILROAD TOWN, AND THE UNION PACIFIC
RAILROAD IS STILL ONE OF ITS LARGEST EMPLOYERS. GEORGE
WILLE (WILL-EE) WORKED FOR THE RAILROAD FOR FORTY-FIVE
YEARS.

TAPE: CUT NINE - WILLE

"I CAME FROM, YOU MIGHT SAY, A RAILROAD FAMILY. MY DAD
WAS RAILROADING WHEN I WAS BORN. SO IT'S KIND OF IN THE
BLOOD, AND I HAD FOUR BROTHERS WORKING HERE (FOR UNION
PACIFIC) AT ONE TIME."

NARR: GEORGE WILLE HAS DONE A LOT OF READING ABOUT THE EARLY DAYS
OF THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD, AND HE LIKES TO TALK ABOUT
THE MEN WHO BUILT THE RAILROAD ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS AND THEN
WORKED ON IT.

TAPE: CUT TEN -- WILLE

"WE'VE GOT A FIRST-CLASS, A-1 RAILROAD RUNNING ACROSS
WYOMING, AND IT'S BEEN A BLESSING TO LARAMIE AND THESE
OTHER TOWNS IT WENT THROUGH. IT'S BROUGHT IN A BIG
PAYROLL. IT KEPT MANY MEN WORKING, NOT DIRECTLY WITH
THE RAILROAD BUT INDIRECTLY. FOR INSTANCE, HERE, AS
HISTORY TELLS US, THERE'S THOUSANDS OF TIES BEEN CUT OUT
(IN THE MOUNTAINS WEST OF LARAMIE) THAT WAS LAID UNDER
(THE TRACKS) BACK IN THE EARLY DAYS. THAT MADE BIG
BUSINESS -- TIE-CHOPPERS AND TIMBERMEN. AND STILL TO
THIS DAY THEY'RE GETTING TIES FROM SOME OF THOSE DISTRICTS,
AND IT'S A BIG BUSINESS."

NARR: TODAY, THE TRAINS THAT RUMBLE THROUGH LARAMIE CARRY MORE
COAL THAN ANYTHING ELSE -- WYOMING COAL FROM THE MINES
FARTHER WEST. THE TRAIN CREWS ARE MUCH SMALLER THAN THEY

NARR: WERE WHEN GEORGE WILLE WORKED AS A BRAKEMAN, RIDING IN
(CONT) THE CABOOSE WITH HIS BUDDIES. NOW THAT HE'S RETIRED, HE
SAYS HE DOESN'T MISS THE ENGINES OR THE BOXCARS, OR EVEN
THE PEOPLE HE MET DURING THE EIGHT YEARS HE WORKED AS A
CONDUCTOR ON PASSENGER TRAINS.

TAPE: CUT ELEVEN -- WILLE

"BUT THERE'S ONE THING I REALLY MISS -- I MISS A LOT OF
THE BOYS I WORKED WITH."

TAPE: CUT TWELVE -- SOUND OF RAILROAD TRAIN -- IN FULL BRIEFLY,
THEN FADE UNDER:

NARR: AS RANCHERS BOUGHT UP THE LAND AROUND LARAMIE, AND
RAILROAD MEN KEPT THE TRAINS ROLLING, LARAMIE ITSELF
WAS DEVELOPING AS AN INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL CENTER.
THE STATE LEGISLATURE HAD VOTED MONEY TO ESTABLISH A
UNIVERSITY THERE IN 1886. WYOMING'S POPULATION WAS SO
SMALL IN THOSE DAYS, AND STATE REVENUES WERE SO LIMITED,
THAT FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OR SO THE UNIVERSITY'S
SURVIVAL WAS UNCERTAIN. BUT BY THE 1920'S, ITS STONE
TOWER HAD BECOME A LANDMARK FOR PEOPLE ARRIVING IN LARAMIE,
AND ITS SEVERELY UNDERPAID FACULTY INCLUDED SEVERAL
DISTINGUISHED WRITERS AND POETS. ONE OF THE EARLY STUDENTS
WAS THE SAME TED OLSON WE HAVE ALREADY MET WORKING ON HIS
FATHER'S RANCH. HE LATER BECAME EDITOR OF A NEWSPAPER
NAMED FOR ITS FOUNDER'S PET MULE: THE LARAMIE BOOMERANG.
A LATER EDITOR, ERNIE LINFORD, REMEMBERS TED OLSON
FONDLY:

TAPE: CUT THIRTEEN -- LINFORD

"THE BOOMERANG AT THAT TIME (IN THE 1930'S) HAD A NEWS EDITOR, TED OLSON, WHO WAS A SUPERB INDIVIDUAL AND A TERRIFIC NEWSPERMAN. HE WAS MY MENTOR, AND HE USED TO LEAVE LITTLE MEMOS ON MY TYPEWRITER CORRECTING MY GRAMMAR AND TELLING ME HOW YOU WROTE NEWS. AND I'M PROUD AND HAPPY THAT I WAS ABLE TO WORK UNDER TED OLSON."

NARR: THOUGH THE BOOMERANG WAS A SMALL NEWSPAPER, IT MADE A NAME FOR ITSELF THROUGH GOOD NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS COVERAGE AND FEARLESS EDITORIALIZING. ERNIE LINFORD SAYS HE HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM IN WRITING EDITORIALS FOR TEN YEARS, UNTIL FINANCIAL TROUBLES FORCED THE PAPER'S MANAGEMENT TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT OFFENDING POTENTIAL ADVERTISERS WHO COULD KEEP THE PAPER GOING. AT THAT POINT, ERNIE LINFORD QUIT AND WENT TO WORK FOR A NEWSPAER IN UTAH. BUT HE LATER RETURNED AND NOW WRITES A WEEKLY COLUMN, OFTEN ABOUT THE SUBJECT THAT CONCERNS HIM MOST: CONSERVATION OF WYOMING'S NATURAL RESOURCES.

TAPE: CUT FOURTEEN -- LINFORD

"HERE IN WYOMING, WE'RE A RAW MATERIALS STATE, AND WHAT I'M VERY (MUCH) INTERESTED IN IS THAT WE DON'T TEAR UP THE WHOLE THING (THE LAND) AND DESTROY OUR RESOURCES JUST FOR A QUICK CREATION OF ENERGY. I THINK WE CAN HAVE BOTH. I THINK WE CAN HAVE DEVELOPMENT OF COAL AND OIL AND STILL ABIDE BY CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES WHICH I HAVE PREACHED."

NARR: ERNIE LINFORD IS TALKING ABOUT THE HOTTEST ISSUE IS WYOMING TODAY: HOW THE STATE'S VAST COAL AND OIL SUPPLIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. WYOMING'S FIRST SETTLERS THOUGHT OF IT AS AN ENDLESS SWEEP OF NEARLY EMPTY LAND, SUITABLE FOR CATTLE RAISING BECAUSE IT WAS TOO TOO HIGH, DRY AND MOUNTAINOUS FOR ANYTHING ELSE. AFTER NEARLY A CENTURY OF SETTLEMENT, WYOMING STILL HAS ONLY A THIRD OF MILLION PEOPLE SPREAD OVER

NARR: AN AREA SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN WEST GERMANY. BUT THE
(CONT) WORLDWIDE ENERGY CRISIS MAY CHANGE ALL THAT. WYOMING HAS
WHAT MAY BE THE LARGEST SUPPLY OF LOW-SULFUR COAL IN THE
UNITED STATES, AND THE PRESSURE IS ON TO MINE IT. OLD
WYOMING RESIDENTS HATE THE CROWDING, POLLUTION, AND SOCIAL
ILLS THAT ALWAYS SEEM TO RESULT FROM LARGE-SCALE MINERAL
DEVELOPMENT. LARAMIE ITSELF IS NOT DIRECTLY THREATENED,
SINCE THERE ARE NO LARGE-SCALE COAL OR OIL DEPOSITS
NEARBY. BUT OPINION LEADERS IN LARAMIE LIKE ERNIE
LINFORD FEEL AN OBLIGATION TO WARN OTHER WYOMING RESIDENTS
ABOUT THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS TO PROTECT
THE LAND FROM THE WORST SIDE-EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT.

TAPE: CUT FIFTEEN -- LINFORD

"I THINK WYOMING HAS MADE SOME REMARKABLE STRIDES IN THE
RIGHT DIRECTION. I GET VERY WORRIED, HOWEVER, BECAUSE I
THINK THE SITING LAW (GOVERNING THE LOCATION OF INDUSTRY)
AND THE LAND USE LAW THAT WERE PUSHED THROUGH THE
LEGISLATURE ARE UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK, EITHER OVERTLY
OR OTHERWISE, AND IT'S GOING TO TAKE CAREFUL WATCHING BY THE
WYOMING RESIDENTS WHO ARE CONCERNED TO PREVENT THESE (LAWS)
EITHER FROM BEING DISREGARDED OR JUST VIOLATED."

NARR: WHAT OF THE FUTURE OF LARAMIE ITSELF? THOUGH RANCHERS STILL
GRAZE CATTLE ON THE LARAMIE PLAINS, THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
HAS MOVED MANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES TO NEARBY CHEYENNE, AND THE
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING HAS BECOME THE TOWN'S LARGEST EMPLOYER.
ONCE A SMALL AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, IT NOW HAS MORE THAN
EIGHT THOUSAND STUDENTS AND HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT
HISTORICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER. EIGHTY-FOUR-
YEAR-OLD PROFESSOR WILSON CLOUGH, (RHYMES WITH "PLOW")
WHO WITNESSED THE UNIVERSITY'S BEGINNINGS, TALKS ABOUT ITS
FUTURE:

TAPE: CUT SIXTEENTH - CLOUGH

"ALL OVER THE COUNTRY THERE IS A DEFINITE PREDICTION THAT COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS ARE GOING TO FALL OFF. BUT I THINK THAT (THE UNIVERSITY OF) WYOMING, BECAUSE OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS, IS LIKELY TO KEEP ON GROWING FOR A TIME: (IN THE) FIRST PLACE BECAUSE THE POPULATION IS GROWING, (IN THE) SECOND PLACE BECAUSE WYOMING IS A VERY CRITICAL STATE IN TERMS OF ENERGY. THERE'S STILL MUCH OIL AND COAL IN THIS STATE AND URANIUM AND SO ON, SO THAT THE ENERGY CRISIS IS CONCENTRATING ON THESE WESTERN STATES FOR ITS (FUEL) SOURCES, ALONG WITH ALASKA, IN THE FUTURE."

NARR: ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IS AFFECTING LARAMIE IN ANOTHER WAY:
PEOPLE WHO COME TO WYOMING TO WORK ON NEW GENERATING PLANTS OR OTHER PROJECTS OFTEN CHOOSE TO LIVE IN LARAMIE AND COMMUTE TO THEIR JOBS. SO LARAMIE, WITH ITS CLOSE TIES TO THE PAST, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IGNORE THE FUTURE. AND WHY SHOULD IT?
LARAMIE'S TWENTY-SIX THOUSAND CITIZENS SEEM CONFIDENT THAT THE SAME KNOW-HOW THAT BUILT THE RAILROADS AND MADE RANCHES FROM THE PRAIRIES WILL HELP THEM MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

TAPE: WESTERN THEME - ESTABLISH, THEN FADE UNDER:

AN CR: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY: LARAMIE, WYOMING WAS WRITTEN BY JILL STRICKLAND.
LISTEN AGAIN, (DATE) _____ AT (TIME)) _____,
WHEN THE VOICE OF AMERICA WILL BRING YOU A PICTURE IN WORDS AND SOUNDS OF ANOTHER AMERICAN CITY.
YOUR REPORTER WAS _____, AND THIS IS _____-.

TAPE: MUSIC UP FOR FILL IF NEEDED

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RK/PY